



United States Mission to the OSCE

Session 3b: Transportation Security

As delivered by Alex Johnson, Representative of the Helsinki Commission
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“Transportation security” as a topic of discussion encompasses so many elements that it would be impossible to address them all in one session. However, as a common theme linking transportation to other security issues, both within the economic and environmental dimension and across all dimensions, transparency through intensified cooperation and consultation should be a critical aspect of the conversation. By adhering to the concept of transparency in our efforts, we can achieve a number of important goals in the transportation sector that will enhance security throughout the OSCE space.

First, we should think through how we view transportation as a component of our national economies, and use existing frameworks to enhance the dialogue on sharing of best practices of securing and modernizing transportation infrastructure. Since 2007, enhancing international supply chain security has been a fundamental part of our national strategy to ensure domestic security and prosperity. More recently, we have taken a new look at our domestic transportation infrastructure, with President Obama saying, “What we need is a smart system of infrastructure equal to the needs of the 21st century.” We recognize that the participating States of the OSCE are at various levels of development in their transportation infrastructure, and we believe all could benefit from a refocused commitment to sharing best practices and to forging stronger ties for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Second, we should explore the possibilities for future cooperation in developing new transportation technologies and networks. The incoming Lithuanian chair has proposed we discuss the idea of “green transportation corridors,” with an eye toward reducing the cost while increasing the throughput of ground transportation networks. We welcome an exploration of this topic as an example of how the OSCE can play one of its traditional roles, identifying new opportunities for cooperation.

Third, we should work cooperatively to ensure transportation links are as efficient as possible, not just in their energy consumption, but also in the time and administrative burden they impose on the movement of people and goods. The OSCE can help by providing training and a forum for the sharing of best practices on border management, harmonizing customs policies, and maintenance of existing infrastructure. The OSCE can also help by continuing to support participating States becoming parties to relevant international legal instruments developed by the International Maritime Organization and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, as we agreed at the 2008 Ministerial Conference in Helsinki.

We must continue to protect and enhance our transportation infrastructure in a transparent and comprehensive way, in part by mitigating the deleterious effects transportation modes can have on the environment, and in part by upgrading transportation networks as a boost to local and regional economies. By ensuring that transportation networks contribute to sustainable economic growth, we will be taking a vital step in enhancing the security of the OSCE space.